Irv Drasnin
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I understand that I've rushed in where Miss Maine feared to tread. Let me know if Milt ever arranges that one and I'll come back. From what I hear, after today you may owe me one. There are some things I want to assure you of at the outset: One, I'm not running for president. Two, I have no ties with the CIA. Three, I am not now nor have I ever been a member of or associated in any way with The Fund for Animals.

I read in the Kennebec Journal that I am a brave man -- looking right down the gun barrel. While I hope and trust that that's merely a bit of colorful local writing, I have asked myself the question, what am I doing here? I guess there are several reasons. One is, I was invited. Another is that I think it's important to respond to the response to "The Guns of Autumn." Another possible reason is that I'm tired of being shot at.

Since you have invited me here, perhaps you should know something more about me. Judging from some of the mail I've been getting the past few months I best begin by attesting to one, my patriotism, and two, my manhood. As for my regional bias -- this New Yorker was born in West Virginia, raised in California, and has lived and worked in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Washington, D.C. The only job I've had in my adult life is being a reporter. In that line of work I've made several television news documentaries -- about health care, advertising, dissent in the Soviet Union, China, politics in the South and football, among others -- and if any of you would like to discuss any of those subjects, I'd be delighted.

But I have the feeling that the reason I was invited here today is to discuss a recent documentary about hunting. I believe it is important for me to be here, for us to see and hear each other, and I'm sorry our time is so short. I sometimes get the feeling that some of you may have the notion that CBS News is some faceless, nameless institution composed of shadowy figures, totally unlike yourselves, and dedicated to debasing the virtues of mom and apple pie. Well, that might serve all of us at one time or another as a convenient image, but it is a false one. I know my colleagues, at CBS and elsewhere, to by and large be hard-working men and women, professionally trained and of years experience -- who are not infallible -- who have feelings, and opinions, and points of view, and who do everything humanly possible to separate those frailties from their given assignments -- who do their best to cover and report matters of interest and concern to you -- usually on subjects not of their own choosing, which is how I came to spend a year on the subject of hunting -- (not as a crusade, or a vendetta, or for that matter with prejudice -- but as a reporter, on assignment). It is a subject to which I had hardly given a moment's thought. Some have suggested that that immediately disqualifies me from reporting about it -- though no one had ever suggested that because I am not a fireman I could not cover a fire, or because I am not a doctor I could not report about health care, or because I am not Chinese I could not report about China. So how do we go about it? Invariably, with a lot of hard work, a lot of research, a lot of legwork, and -- in my case, with an excess of cigarettes and coffee.

We seek out the people who are involved, expert and layman, listen to what they have to say, read what they have written -- persons with as many different perspectives and viewpoints on a subject as we can find. So it was in the preparation of "The Guns of Autumn."

During that preparation we had the temerity to read a book by Cleveland Amory. It was not the only book we read that is critical of hunting in one way or another. We did read such books. We read a great many books, the great majority of which are in no way critical of hunting -- among them: Meditations on Hunting, Game Management, Hunter's Digest, The Hunter's Field Guide, North American Big Game, The Ben East Hunting Book, Man the Hunter, the NRA Hunting Annuals and the monthly issues of the outdoors magazines.

We talked to people who are critical of hunting or of some aspects of hunting -- and a great many people who are not -- including A. Starker Leopold, a noted professor and outdoorsman whose father wrote the book of game management; spokesmen for the Wildlife Management Institute, the National Shooting Sports Foundation, the National Rifle Association, the North American Game Breeders and Shooting Preserves Operators Association, the Michigan United Conservation Clubs, the Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsman's Clubs, the Utah Wildlife Federation, of Remington and Winchester, the Department of Interior, many state game department officials -- and a great many hunters, almost all of them of years experience and representing a cross-section of Americans professionally, economically and geographically.

It was not difficult to find points of view. Rarely have I had to deal with any subject where passions are so high, reason so elusive, and a middle ground so hard to find.

Judging from the response we've had, to please the partisan anti-hunter I suppose we would have had to spend 90 minutes covering the illegalities and abuses of hunting:

- on poaching in its various forms; including the shooting of wildlife out of season, exceeding bag limits, and the jacklighting of game;
- on the shooting of wildlife from roads and moving vehicles;
- on the wounding and crippling of wildlife;
- on the lead poisoning of waterfowl;
- on trespassing and vandalism;
- on the shooting of non-game species;
- and on some legal practices such as the use of towers and animal drives.

And to please the partisan hunter, I suppose we would have had to spend 90 minutes on a picture of one man, or two, sitting or walking in utter isolation not once lifting rifle or shotgun to shoulder.

We did not seek to cover the ideal any more than we did the extremes -- nor any one kind of hunt, or hunter. Nor do we assume, nor did the broadcast claim, that <u>any</u> documentary on <u>any</u> subject is an all-embracing, all-inclusive report. And judging from the response we've received, nor are partisans on either side of the subject of hunting overly <u>concerned</u> with having every possible aspect of it reported -- but only those aspects which support their particular point of view. (It is therefore with some relief that it would seem that we have pleased no one.)

In any case, giving pleasure certainly is not the role or function of the journalist.

Why do we cover, report on any given subject. Well, most simply, we ask ourselves, is it important enough? Is it justified because of its social, or economic, or historical importance? Does it involve or concern enough people? Does it touch our lives? The subject of hunting seemed to qualify on all journalistic grounds -- and, again, the response generated would seem to confirm that. You might be interested in an idea of what some of that response has been: I have been told that:

- I am a destroyer of the American heritage, employed by the Communist Broadcasting System, worthy of such predecessors as Goebbels and Stalin;

- An idiot, an old lady, a psychologically scarred victim of the Bambi syndrome;

- A liar, a cheat, a prostitute -- whose version of the truth is like that of a woman who claims to have had only two affairs in her life: one with the Green Bay Packers and the other with the Chinese army.

I have received assorted invitations -- and a bag of bull-manure -- which was said to be of a higher grade than that produced in New York.

Those are some of the nicer things that have been said about us -- and, all right, that goes with the job, and yes, everyone is entitled to his or her opinion. But some things have been said, and printed, that go beyond opinion and name-calling and must, I feel, be called to account.

I'm sure there are those among you who are angry. Well, there are some things that disturb me too. There has been a litany of charges and assumptions made not about me but about the broadcast -- repeated mostly by outdoors writers who, unlike the Kiwanis Club of Augusta, Maine, have never bothered to talk to me about it or to check the facts. Among those charges are these:

1) that we staged events, or parts of them; that we arranged for, even paid for, even used paid actors for at least some of those events reported in the broadcast. We did not -- not once;

2) that some of the sound, particularly of gunshots, was not real -- that we dubbed in sound effects. We did not;

3) that either out of ignorance or pre-meditated malice, we sought out and depicted only the so-called "slob hunter," usually when drunk. We did not, nor did we ever see or film a drunken hunter;

4) that we misrepresented the purpose of the film, and furthermore claimed that it was to be part of a celebration of the nation's bicentennial. We did not;

5) that we knowingly and purposefully conspired with anti-hunters to present their point of view about hunting and deliberately set out to discredit the sport of hunting and to deprive Americans of their firearms. We did not.

Which brings me back to the Kennebec Journal and its editorial of last Friday. According to the editorial writer, the documentary, "bore down heavily on one kind of hunting" -- "much of the footage was taken in private game preserves," selectivity which has resulted in distortion and misleading conclusions." Is that true?

"The Guns of Autumn" is an eighty-minute broadcast divided into four parts -- approximately fifteen minutes of which dealt with the subject of shooting preserves -- approximately eight minutes of which dealt with two hunts at a preserve on the day we were filming -- of which approximately three to four minutes covered the shooting of two deer. The editorial is based on a false premise. It is ironic that it should talk about distortion, selectivity and misleading conclusions. But why discuss preserves at all? There are several reasons.

- The North American Game Breeders and Shooting Preserve Operators Association lists more than three-thousand shooting preserves for birds and waterfowl -- and a list is widely distributed by Winchester-Western and the National Shooting Sports Foundation.

- There is no similar authoritative number for big game shooting preserves, but published estimates run as high as 425.

- Yet the Texas Game Department says there are more than 12,000 [redacted] shooting preserves in that state alone.

- In 1970, the last time such figures were compiled, hunters spent more than 17-and-a-half million dollars in daily entrance and privilege fees for hunting in commercial preserves.

- The Wildlife Management Institute regards the preserve as just another aspect of game management.

- And many hunters regard the preserve as a more humane way to take their game and as the hunting of the future in America.

- It is an aspect of hunting that is covered regularly in the outdoor press and literature -- and advertised every month in the outdoors magazines and which is promoted by hunting organizations. For example, in November, 1974, the official publication of The Michigan United Conservation Clubs ran a release distributed by the National Shooting Sports Foundation which advertised November as Husband-Wife Hunting Month at shooting preserves across the nation -- during which a ten per cent discount was given to couples.

Finally, there have been raised a couple of other questions which I believe are important to clarify, not just as they pertain to "The Guns of Autumn," but to any news broadcast.

One is the apparently widespread belief that there is a connection between the sponsors of a news broadcast and its content. I have read letter after letter swearing never again to buy the products of the sponsor who remained in the broadcast or of the sponsors who did not -- depending on the point of view of the writer. Speaking for CBS News, sponsors have nothing to do with the preparation or content of a news broadcast, documentary or otherwise, nor do they even see it before it is aired. They are buying time in a news program and nothing more. Nor will a news program be kept off the air because there is no sponsor. It will not.

When commercial time is not sold, CBS as well as the other networks, usually fill that time in one of two ways -- which brings me to the second question raised in this area. That time is then filled either by promotions of other network programs or by giving free air time to a wide range of generally recognized service and charitable organizations -- which have no advance warning of or control over where those messages will be run. One of those organizations is the United Fund. I have seen many letters condemning the United Fund because one of its public service announcements was run during "The Guns of Autumn." The United Fund had nothing to do with the program or with the fact that CBS ran one of its messages during the program. It should not be made an innocent victim.

And speaking of innocent victims, Milt -- I'll now turn the rest of this program back to you.